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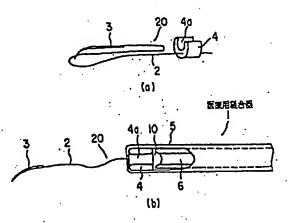
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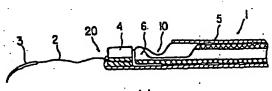
医按用链合器 (54) 【発明の名称】

(57)【要約】

【目的】簡単な疑合作業によって十分な疑合強度を得る ことができる医療用機合器の提供を目的としている。

【構成】本発明の医療用礎合器1は、鍵合糸2が接続固 定されて成り、前記陸合糸2を収容可能な少なくとも1 'つの収容部4aを有する糸止め部材4と、手術部位に挿 入可能で且つ前記糸止め部材4を着脱自在にセット可能 なシース5と、シース5内に配設され且つシース5内に セットされた糸止め部材4を変形させることによって糸 止め部材4の収容部4 a内に収容された健合糸2を締め 付け固定する糸止め手段6とを具備している。





【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 経合糸が接続固定されて成り、前記経合 糸の一部を収容可能な少なくとも1つの収容部を有する 糸止め部材と、

手術部位に挿入可能で且つ前記糸止め部材を羞配自在に セット可能なシースと、

前記シース内に配設され、前記シース内にセットされた 前記糸止め部材を変形させることによって糸止め部材の 前記収容部内に収容された混合糸を締め付け固定する糸 止め手段と、

を具備したことを特徴とする医療用縫合器。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【産業上の利用分野】本発明は、例えば外科手折で組織 を経合糸によって縫い合わせる際に使用される医療用疑 合器に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】従来、生体組織等を疑合系によって疑い 合わせる医療用疑合器としては、例えば米国特許第3.65 7,056 号に開示されている経合器がある。この符合器 は、糸の結び目(糸止め)を簡単に作製するために超音 波を使用したものであり、糸と糸とを超音波によって接 **読したり、或いは、ファスナに通した糸の端部を超音波** で変形させて頭部状に成形し、これによって、ファスナ と糸とを接続するといったものである。

【0003】また、このような総合器としては、その他 に、米国特計第5,171.251 号、米国特許第5,306,280 号、特開平6-7361号公報等に開示されるような疑 合クリップがある。この経合クリップは、2本の足を有 するポリマー材料からなるクリップの内部に経合糸を配 30 置し、この状態で前記クリップに熱を加えてクリップを 軟化させた後、クリップに圧縮力を加えてクリップの足 を閉じ、その後、熱と圧縮力とを取り除いて、疑合糸と クリップとを繋ぎ止めるといったものである。

[0004]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】しかしながら、米国特 許第3.657.056 号に開示されている超音波雄合器によっ て経合糸同志を接続すると、経合糸同士の接合面積が小 さいため、十分な接合強度を得ることができない。ま た、糸にテンションをかけながら超音波を加えるため、 糸がそのテンションと超音波エネルギとによって切れて しまわないように超音波の大きさやその放射時間、糸の テンション等を許容範囲に設定する必要があり、疑合作 業や疑合強度が提合糸それ自身によって制約されてしま う。さらに、姓合糸の蟷部を頭部状に成形する作業も容 易ではない。

【0005】これに対し、前述したほ合クリップにはこ のような欠点がない。しかし、クリップに熟を加えてク リップ全体を軟化させるため、加熱から軟化、冷却、硬 化に要する時間が10秒程度必要となる。このため、迅 50 ようになっている。この場合、シース5の開口10は、

速な疑合を行なうことができない。また、クリップと糸 とを10秒間保持しておかなければならないため、祝者 や患者にかなりの負担を強いるとともに、ほ合作業の効 率が悪い。特に多くの部位をクリップする場合には、そ の作業が非常に大変である。また、クリップがポリマー であるため、外力によってクリップのヒンジ部が弾性変 形を起こし、その結果、クリップの再足が開いて、経合 糸が外れてしまう戌がある。

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【0006】本発明は上記事情に着目してなされたもの 10 であり、その目的とするところは、簡単な疑合作業によ って十分な経合強度を得ることができる医療用経合器を 提供することにある。

[0007]

【課題を解決する手段および作用】上記課題を解決する ために、本発明の医療用鍵合器は、鍵合糸が接続固定さ れて成り、前記2合糸の一部を収容可能な少なくとも1 つの収容部を有する糸止め部材と、手術部位に挿入可能 で且つ前記糸止め部材を着脱自在にセット可能なシース と、前記シース内に配設され且つ前記シース内にセット 20 された前記糸止め部材を変形させることによって糸止め 部材の前記収容部内に収容された鎌合糸を締め付け固定 する糸止め手段とを具備している。

【0008】上記構成によれば、糸止め部材の収容部内 に接合糸を引き込んだ状態で糸止め手段により糸止め部 材を交形させて経合糸を締め込み固定することができ る。つまり、糸止め手段は、疑合糸が糸止め部材によっ て締め付けられて糸止め部材に結合されるように、糸止 め部材を変形させることができる。特に、前記糸止め手 段が、超音波振動エネルギによって前記糸止め部材を変 形させる場合には、総合作業を一層迅速に行なうことが できる.

[0009]

【実施例】以下、図面を参照しつつ本発明の実施例につ いて説明する。図1は本発明の一実施例に係る医療用疑 合器1を示している。 図1の (b) に示すように、本実 と、シース5内に進退自在に挿通された中空の超音波プ ローブ6とから2合器本体が構成されている。超音波ブ ローブ6は、図示しない超音波振動子と超音波駆動回路 とに接続されている。また、シース5の先端部には開口 10が形成され、この開口10を通じてシース5の先端 部内に陸合体20をセットできるようになっている。

【0010】すなわち、図1の(a)に示すように、前 記録合体20は、断面がU字形状を成す樹脂製の糸止め 部材4と、この糸止め部材4に接続固定された経合糸2 と、姓合糸2の先端に設けられた姓合針3とから構成さ れている。そして、統合体20は、糸止め部材4をシー ス5の開口を通じてシース5の先端部内に嵌め込み固定 することによって、シース5に着脱自在にセットすれる

シース5の先端側上面を切り欠いて形成されているとと もに、シース5にセットされた糸止め部材4を超音波ブ ロープ6によって前方に押し出した際に糸止め部材4が 開口10の先端側から突出できるようにシース5の先端 を大きく切り欠いて形成されているものである。

【0011】本実施例で使用される経合糸2は、生体吸 収性の樹脂によって形成することが好ましいが、非吸収 性のものであっても構わない。また、提合糸2は、モノ フィラメント(単線)とマルチフィラメント(複線)と を使い分けることができる。この場合、モノフィラメン トは、引張強度の大きい崇材からなるコアと、落着性の 良好な素材からなるクラッドとの2層構造を成すものが 好適である。また、マルチフィラメントは、糸を揺んで 形成したもの、成いは、糸を撚って形成したものが好適 である。このようにすることで、糸止め部材4内に縫合 糸2を締め込んでこれら両者を結合させる(後述する) 際に、糸止め部材4が経合糸2の編み目や弦り目に食い 込んで結合強度が増し、糸止め部材4から混合糸2が滑 り抜けにくくなる。また、この場合、マルチフィラメン トは、異なる素材を組み合わせて成るものであっても良 20

【0012】なお、経合糸2の先端に設けられる疑合針 3は、直線状のものや、湾曲状のもの、或いは、直線状 のもので、その先端部が湾曲した形状のものなど、縫合 部位によって適宜登択して使用する。

【0013】次に、上記構成の疑合器1を用いて生体組 総の提合を行なう場合について図2を参照しつつ説明す る。まず、シース5に疑合体20をセットする。この作 業は、シース5内の超音波プローブ6を手元回に若干引 き込んで、シース5の先端部内に糸止め部材4を収容可 30 能な空間を形成し、この空間内に糸止め部材4を開口1 0を通じてセットすることによって行なう。

【0014】次に、経合体20がセットされたシース5 を図示しないトラカールを介して体腔内に挿入する。そ して、別のルートで体腔内に挿入した持針器(図示せ ず)で疑合針3を保持しながら疑合すべき生体組織30 に経合針3を刺し通し、生体組織30から抜け出た縫合 糸2を糸止め部材4のU字溝4a内に引き込む(図2の (a)の状態)。

【0015】 この状態で、今度は、図2の(b) に示す・40 ように、鉗子32を用いて経合系2を引張り、その引張 力で組織同志を接合させながら、超音波プローブ6をシ ース5内で前進させて糸止め部材4に押し付けた状態 で、シース5の先端を組織30の経合部位に押し付け る。そして、この状態で、超音波プローブ6からの超音 波を糸止め部材4に伝達する。これによって、糸止め部 材4は、超音波プローブ6からの超音波によってその内 部が発熱して軟化するとともに、 超音波プローブ 6の押 圧力によって容易に変形して疑合糸2を締め込む。この 時、糸止め部材4の交形とともにほ合糸2を引張りなが 50 ムーズに進めることができる。

6超音波プローブ6によって糸止め部材4を組織30個 に押し出してシース5を手元側に引き戻す(図2の (c) の状態) と、糸止め部材4が開口10 (シース 5) の先端から抜け出て組織30の疑合部に圧接すると ともに、組織30に対する経合強度が増大する。 [0016] その後、擬合糸2と条止め部材4とをこの 状態で体内に留置する。この時、余分な経合糸2をハサ

よって、組織の経合が完了する。 【0017】以上説明したように、本実施例の医療用證 合器1によれば、糸止め部材4に形成されたU字溝4a によって雄合糸2を糸止め部材4内に容易に引き込むこ とができるとともに、経合糸2をU字溝4a内に引き込 んだ状態で、糸止め部材4を超音波によって変形させて 2、2を締め込むことができるため、糸止めを確実、 容易、且つ迅速に形成することができる。

ミ鉗子で切り取って挺合針3とともに回収する。これに

【0018】また、超音波によって糸止め部材4を変形 させて疑合糸2を締め込み結合させるため、挺合糸2同 志を接合して糸止めする場合や、熱によって経合糸2と 糸止め部材4とを圧着する場合に比べて疑合強度が大き い。したがって、その後の外力によって経合状態が接ま ったり、糸止め部材4と疑合糸2との結合状態が解除さ れてしまうといったことがない。

[0019]また、超音波プローブ6と糸止め部材4と がシース5内に保持された状態で超音波プローブ6によ る糸止め部材4の変形を行なうため、縫合作業を容易か つ確実に行なうことができる。

[0020]また、本実施例の医療用機合器1では、糸 止め部材4を2合組織30に押し付けた状態で2合糸2 によって成された組織間接合の接合力を保持させること ができるため、つまり、糸止め部材4を縫合組織30に 押し付けた状態で糸止めを行なえるため、糸止め強度が 大きく、したがって経合強度が大きい確実な経合作業を 行なうことができる。

【0021】図3は糸止め部材4の変形例を示すもので ある。 すなわち、 図3の (a) に示す糸止め部材4 aは・ V字形状を有し、図3の(b)に示す糸止め部材4bは S字形状を有し、図3の (c) に示す糸止め部材4 cは W字形状を有し、図3の(d)に示す糸止め部材4dは 乙字形状を有し、図3の(e)に示す糸止め部材4eは「 X字形状を有し、図3の(f)に示す糸止め部材4fは H字形状を有している。いずれの場合も、疑合糸2を容 易に引き込むことが可能な滞35を1つもしくは複数個 有している.

[0022] このような構成によれば、縫合したい組織 ・手技に応じて、組織を疑った疑合糸2をいずれかの溝 35に引き込むことができる。つまり、縫合糸2を引き 込むべき滞35を選択できる。このように、疑合糸2を 都合の良い溝3.5に引き込むことができれば、降合をス 【0023】また、図3の(8)に示す糸止め部材48はラッパ形状に形成されている。このような構成では、組織を経った設合糸2を提合針3とともに広い開口部38から糸止め部材48内に挿入して狭い開口部39から引き出す。

【0024】このラッパ形状の糸止め部材4gは、その中に2000年に2

【0025】また、図4の(a)に示す糸止め部材40は、提合糸2を挿通可能な径の異なる複数の穴40a,40b,40cと、提った経合糸2を係止可能な大きさの異なる複数の溝35a,35b,35cとを有している。つまり、链合糸2の太さに応じて挿通すべき穴40a,40b,40cと係止させるべき溝35a,35b,35cとを選択することができるように形成されている。

【0026】この構成では、総合糸2を糸止め部材40のいずれかの穴40a、40b、40c内に挿通した状態で結び目41を形成して糸止め部材40に総合糸2を固定する。そして、この固定状態で、組織を縫った総合糸2をいずれかの溝35a、35b、35cに係止させて仮止めを行なう。その後、糸止め部材40を超音波によって変形させ、糸止め部材40と経合糸2とを結合する。

【0027】すなわち、この構成によれば、溝35a、35b、35cに縫合条2を係止させることにより経合糸2が仮止めされるため、鉗子によって溝35a、35b、35c内に縫合糸2を引き込んだ後に鉗子を縫合糸2から離しても、糸止め部材40を変形させて総合糸2を締め込む際に、縫合糸2が溝35a、35b、35cから外れたり、縫合糸2による縫合状態が移んだりすることがない。

【0028】図4の(b)に示す糸止め部材45は、2本の棒45a、45bから成り、これら2本の棒45a、45bはヒンジ46によって互いに回動自在に連結されている。この構成では、提合糸2によって組織を疑った後、この疑った疑合糸2を2つの棒45a、45bの間に配置させた状態で棒45a、45bを閉じる。この状態で、超音波により糸止め部材45を変形させて、整合糸2を締め付け固定する。

【0029】図4の(c)に示す糸止め部材50は、経合糸2が接続固定される第1の部材51と、この第1の部材51に形成された突起53と係合可能な係合孔54を有する第2の部材52とから構成されている。この構成では、経合糸2によって組織を疑った後、この疑った経合糸2を2つの部材51、52間に配置させた状態

で、突起53を係合孔54に係合させることによって2つの部材51,52を合体させれば、経合糸2が締め付け固定される。無論、この状態で糸止め部材50を超音波によって変形させれば、経合強度が向上する。

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【0030】図4の(d)に示す糸止め部材55は棒状部材55aを備えている。この構成では、経合糸2によって組織を縫った後、この経った経合糸2を棒状部材55aに巻き付けた状態で、超音波により経合糸2と棒状部材55aとを落着させる。

【0031】図5の(b)に示す糸止め部材60は、筒状に形成されており、链合糸2を通すための小径の穴61を有している。なお、図5の(a)は糸止め部材60を有する链合体20を示している。この構成では、链合糸2を糸止め部材60の小径の穴61内に挿通した状態で結び目63を形成して糸止め部材60に链合糸2を固定する。

【0032】図6は、糸止め部村60を有する縫合体20と図1に示した疑合器本体とを用いて生体組織の疑合を行なう様子を示したものである。すなわち、まず初めに、開口10を通じてシース5の先端部内に糸止め部村60をセットする。その後、糸止め部村60がセットされたシース5を図示しないトラカールを介して体腔内に挿入する。そして、持針器(図示せず)で経合針3を保持しながら経合すべき生体組織30に経合針3を刺し通し、生体組織30から抜け出た経合糸2を糸止め部村60の内孔に引き込む(図6の(a)の状態)。

【0033】この状態で、今度は、鉗子32を用いて提合条2を引張り、その引張力で組織同志を接合させながら、超音波プローブ6をシース5内で前進させて条止め 30 部材60に押し付けた状態で、シース5の先端を組織30の接合部位に押し付ける。そして、この状態で、超音波プローブ6からの超音波を条止め部材60に伝達する。これによって、糸止め部材60は、超音波プローブ6からの超音波によってその内部が発熱して軟化するとともに、超音波プローブ6の押圧力によって容易に交形して軽合糸2を締め込む。この時、糸止め部材60の変形とともに結合糸2を初張りながら超音波プローブ6によって糸止め部材60を組織30側に押し出してシース5を手元側に引き戻すと、糸止め部材60が開口10(シース5)の先端から抜け出て組織30の疑合部に圧

(図6の(b)参照)。 【0034】その後、提合糸2と糸止め部村60とをこの状態で体内に留置する。この時、余分な経合糸2をハサミ鉗子69(図6の(b)参照)で切り取って経合針3とともに回収する。これによって、組織の経合が完了する。

接するとともに、組織30に対する疑合強度が増大する

【0035】その後、別の組織部位を経合する場合には、ハサミ鉗子69によって切り取った路合糸2を別に50 用意した糸止め部材60の小径の穴61に通して(図6

の(c)参照)、再度、結び目63を形成すれば良い (図6の(d)参照).

【0036】このような構成の糸止め部材60では、こ れを複数個用窓しておくだけで、1本の降合条2を複数 箇所の疑合に繰り返し使用できるため、経済的である。 また、糸止め部村60は、筒状に形成されており、その 中に提合糸2を完全に挿入することができるため、糸止 め部材60を変形させて疑合糸2を締め込む際に疑合糸 2が糸止め部材60から外れてしまうことがない。

【0037】図7は糸止め部材60の変形例を示すもの 10 である。 図7の (a) の糸止め部材60 aは縫合糸2を 揮通可能な径の異なる複数の穴61a,61b,61c を有している。この構成では、縫合に適した太さの縫合 糸2を選択した後、選択した経合糸2の太さに対応した 径の穴61a,61b,61cに縫合糸2を通す。その さの2合糸2を使用できるため便利である。

[10038] 図7の(b)の糸止め部材606は口広で 先細りの沸70を有している。この構成では、疑合に適 した太さの経合糸2を選択した後、選択した経合糸2の 20 太さに対応した深さまで、 経合糸2を沸70に嵌め込 む。 疑合糸2の末端に結び目63を作らなくて良いため **経合作業が楽になる**.

【0039】図7の(c)の糸止め部材60cは幅の異 なる複数の沸73a,73b,73cを有している。こ の構成では、挺合糸2の太さに応じて嵌め込むべき溝7 3a, 73b, 73cを選択できるので、便利である。 . 【0040】 図7の (d) の糸止め部材 60 dは鉤状に 突出する突起部75を有している。この構成では、疑合 を結び付ける。

[0041] 図7の(e)の糸止め部材60eには孔7 7を有する突出部76か形成されている。この構成で は、擬合に適した疑合糸2を選択した後、孔77に疑合 糸2を結び付ける。

[0042]なお、以上説明してきた実施例では、糸止 め部材を変形させて経合糸を締め込むことによって統合 糸と糸止め部材との結合を行なっているが、接着、溶 着、圧着等によって両者を結合させることができること は言うまでもない、また、上記実施例では、超音波によ って糸止め部材を変形させているが、レーザ、ヒータ、 電磁波、電気、振動、化学反応等によっても糸止め部材 を変形させることができることは言うまでもない。

【0043】なお、以上説明してきた危様により、以下 の項で示す各種の構成が得られる。

1. 挺合糸が接続固定されて成り、前記2合糸の一部を 収容可能な少なくとも1つの収容部を有する糸止め部材 と、手術部位に挿入可能で且つ前記糸止め部材を着脱自 在にセット可能なシースと、前配シース内に配設され且 つ前記シース内にセットされた前記糸止め部材を変形さ 50

せることによって糸止め部材の前記収容部内に収容され とを特徴とする医療用鍵合器。

【0044】2. 前記糸止め手段は、超音波振動エネル ギによって前記糸止め部材を変形させることを特徴とす 6第1項に記載の医療用键合器。この第2項の構成によ れば、辞合糸と糸止め部材との固定を迅速に行うことが できる。この場合、超音波振動エネルギーは、糸止め部 材の内部を発熱させるとともに、糸止め部材同志の接触 面を溶着させる作用を有している。

【0045】3. 前記縫合糸が前記糸止め部材に著脱自 在に接続固定されていることを特徴とする第1項に記載 の医療用疑合器。この第3項の構成によれば、疑合糸を 垳中に繰り返し使用することができる。

4. 前記糸止め部材の前記収容部は接合糸を係止可能で あることを特徴とする第1項に記載の医療用链合器。 [0046]

【発明の効果】以上説明したように、本発明の医療用證 合器によれば、簡単な設合作業によって十分な設合強度 を得ることができる。すなわち、本発明の医療用疑合器 は、糸止め部材に形成された収容部によって経合糸を糸 止め部材内に容易に引き込むことができるとともに、経 合糸を収容部内に引き込んだ状態で、糸止め部材を変形 させて総合糸を締め込むことができるため、糸止めを確 実、容易、且つ迅速に形成することができる。

[0047]また、糸止め部材を変形させて疑合糸を締 め込み結合させるため、疑合糸同志を接合して糸止めす る場合や、熱によって経合糸と糸止め部材とを圧着する 場合に比べて疑合強度が大きい。したがって、その後の 糸との結合状態が解除されてしまうといったことがな

[0048]また、糸止め手段と糸止め部材とをシース 内に保持した状態で糸止め手段による糸止め部材の変形 を行なわしめることができるため、経合作業を容易かつ 確実に行なうことができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】(a)は本発明の一実施例に係る医療用疑合器 を構成する疑合体の構成図、(b)は医療用疑合器の要 部を示す平面図、(c)は医療用提合器の要部を示す側 断面図である。

【図2】図1の医療用経合器を用いて経合作業を行なう **様子を示す図である。**

【図3】 ほ合体を構成する糸止め部材の変形例を示す図 である。

【図4】

駐合体を構成する糸止め部材の変形例を示す図 である。

【図5】辞合体を構成する糸止め部材の変形例を示す図

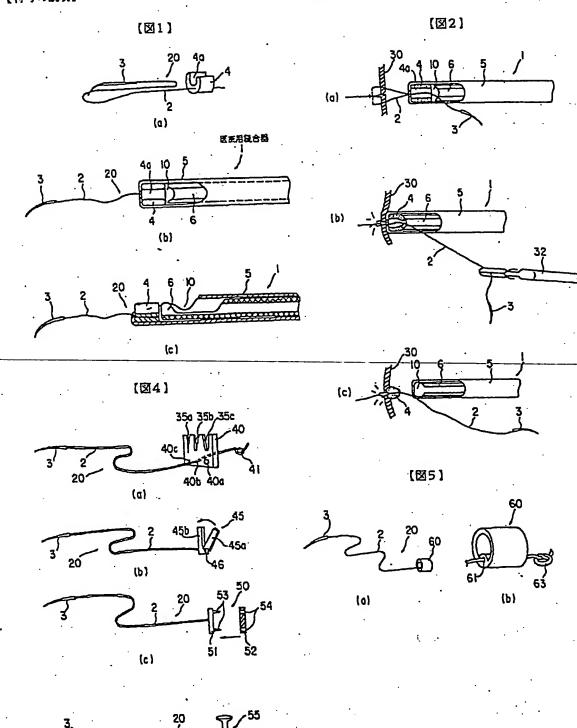
【図6】図5の経合体を用いて疑合作業を行なう様子を

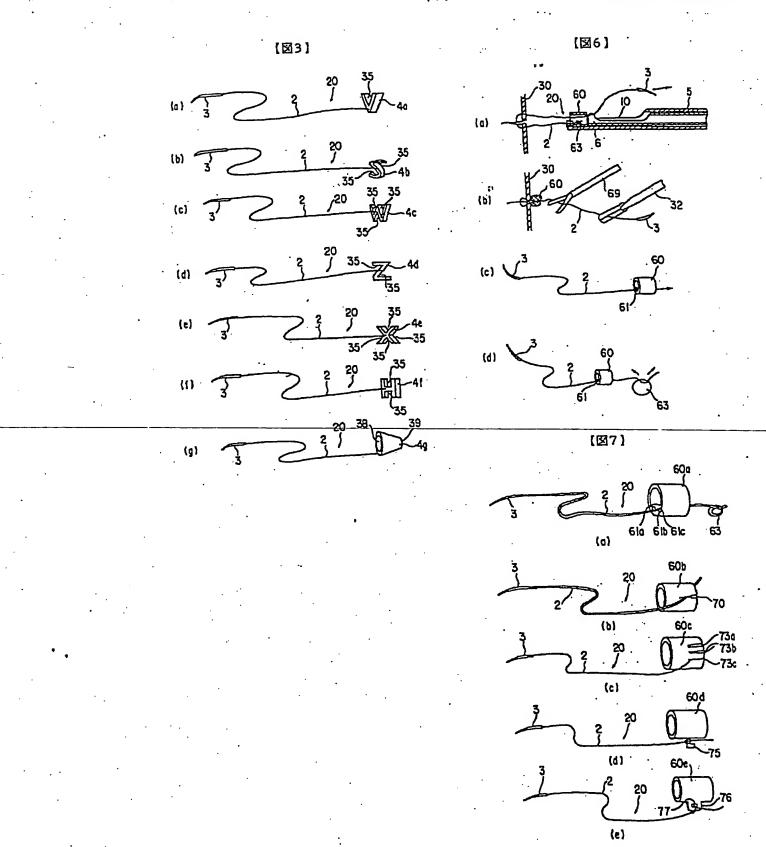
9

(d)

示す図である。 【図7】図5の糸止め部材の変形例を示す図である。 【符号の説明】 1…医療用経合器、2…経合糸、3…経合針、4…糸止め部材、4 a…収容溝(収容部)、5…シース、6…超音波プローブ(糸止め手段)。

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(54) [Title of the Invention] MEDICAL SUTURING INSTRUMENT

(57) [Abstract]

[Object] The object of the present invention is to provide a medical suturing instrument which makes it possible to obtain a sufficient suturing strength by a simple suturing operation.

[Structure] A medical suturing instrument 1 in accordance with the present invention comprises a suture locking member 4 having a suture 2 connected and secured thereto and having at least one receiving portion 4a capable of receiving the suture 2, a sheath 5 capable of being inserted into a surgical region and capable of setting the suture locking member 4 so that it can be freely detached therefrom, and suture locking means 6 which is arranged inside the sheath 5 and which fastens and fixes the suture 2 contained inside the receiving portion 4a of the suture locking member 4 by causing the deformation of the suture locking member 4 set into the sheath 5.

[Patent Claims]

[Claim 1] A medical suturing instrument comprising

a suture locking member having a suture connected and secured thereto and having at least one receiving portion capable of receiving a portion of said suture,

a sheath capable of being inserted into a surgical region and capable of setting said suture

locking member so that it can be freely detached therefrom, and

suture locking means which is arranged inside said sheath and which fastens and fixes the suture contained inside said receiving portion of the suture locking member by causing the deformation of said suture locking member set into said sheath.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Industrial Field of the Invention] The present invention relates to a medical suturing instrument employed for suturing a tissue with a suture in surgical operations.

[0002]

[Description of Prior Art] A suturing instrument disclosed in US Patent 3,657,056 is an example of a medical suturing instrument employed for suturing a body tissue or the like with a suture. In this suturing instrument, ultrasonic waves are used to form easily the thread knots (thread locking), threads are connected to each other with ultrasonic waves, or front ends of threads passed through a fastener are deformed with ultrasonic waves to form a head portion which is used to connect the fastener to the thread.

[0003] Furthermore, other examples of such suturing instruments include suturing clips disclosed in US Patents 5,171,251 and 5,306,280 and Laid-open Japanese Patent Application Heisei 6-7361. In these suturing clips, a suture is placed into a clip consisting of a polymer material and having two legs. In this state, the clip is softened by heating and then a compressive force is applied to the clip to close its legs. Then, the heating and application of compressive force are terminated and the suture and clip are tightly locked.

[0004]

[Problems Addressed by the Invention] However, when the suturing threads are connected to each other with the ultrasonic suturing instrument disclosed in US Patent 3,657,056, since the joining surface area of the two sutures is small, a significant joining strength cannot be obtained. Furthermore, since ultrasonic waves are applied to the suture under tension, the amplitude of ultrasonic waves or irradiation time and tension applied to the suture have to be set within the allowed ranges to prevent the suture rupture by the tension and ultrasonic energy, and the suture itself places limitations on the suturing operation and suturing strength. Furthermore, the formation of a head portion at the front end of a suture is not an easy operation.

[0005] By contrast, the above-described suturing clip is free from these drawbacks. However since the clip body is softened by heating, the time required for softening, cooling, and hardening is within about 10 s. For this reason, fast suturing cannot be conducted. Furthermore, since the clip and suture have to be held for 10 s, a significant burden is placed on the doctor and patient

and the efficiency of suturing operation is poor. In particular, when clipping is conducted in a large number of places, the operation becomes especially difficult. Furthermore, since the clip is made of a polymer, the hinge portion of the clip undergoes elastic deformation under an external force. As a result, the clip legs can be opened and the suturing thread can be released.

[0006] The present invention was developed to overcome the above-described problems and its object is to provide a medical suturing instrument which makes it possible to obtain a sufficient suturing strength by a simple suturing operation.

[0007]

[Means to Resolve the Problems and Operation] In order to resolve the above-described problems, the medical suturing instrument in accordance with the present invention comprises a suture locking member having a suture connected and secured thereto and having at least one receiving portion capable of receiving a portion of the suture, a sheath capable of being inserted into a surgical region and capable of setting the suture locking member so that it can be freely detached therefrom, and suture locking means which is arranged inside the sheath and which fastens and fixes the suture contained inside the receiving portion of the suture locking member by causing the deformation of the suture locking member set into the sheath.

[0008] With the above-described structure, the suture can be fastened and fixed by causing the deformation of the suture locking member with the suture locking means in a state in which the suture is pulled into the receiving portion of the suture locking member. In other words, the suture locking means can cause the deformation of the suture locking member so that the suture is fastened by the suture locking member and joined to the suture locking member. In particular, the suturing operation can be conducted even faster when the suture locking means causes the deformation of the suture locking member with energy of ultrasonic vibrations.

[0009]

[Embodiment] Embodiments of the present invention will be described below with reference to the drawings attached. Fig 1 shows a medical suturing instrument 1 relating to an embodiment of the present invention. As shown in Fig 1(b), in the suturing instrument 1 of this embodiment, the suturing instrument body consists of a cylindrical sheath 5 that can be inserted in the body and a hollow ultrasound probe 6 inserted into the sheath 5 so that it is free to reciprocate therein. The ultrasound probe 6 is connected to an ultrasound oscillator and an ultrasound driving circuit which are not shown in the figure. Furthermore, an orifice 10 is formed in the front end portion of the sheath 5, and a suturing body 20 can be set inside the front end portion of the sheath 5.

[0010] Thus, as shown in Fig 1(a), the suturing body 20 consists of a suture locking member 4 made of a resin and having an U-shaped cross section, a suture 2 connected and secured to the suture locking member 4, and a suturing needle 3 attached to the front end of the suture 2. The suture locking member 4 is passed through the orifice in sheath 5 and fit into and secured to the front end portion of the sheath 5, thereby setting the suturing body 20 onto the sheath 5 so that it can be freely detached therefrom. In this case, the orifice 10 of sheath 5 is formed by cutting the upper surface at the front end of sheath 5 and cutting out a large portion of the front end of

sheath 5 so that when the suture locking member 4 set into the sheath 5 is pushed forward by the ultrasound probe 6, the suture locking member 4 can protrude from the front end of orifice 10.

[0011] It is preferred that the suture 2 used in this embodiment be formed from a biologically absorbable resin, but a non-absorbable suture may be also used. Furthermore, the suture 2 may have a monofilament or multifilament structure. In this case it is preferred that the monofilament have a two-layer structure composed by a core consisting of a material with a high tensile strength and a clad consisting of a material with good fusibility. The monofilament is preferably formed by twisting or braiding the threads. With such a structure of the suture, when the suture 2 is fastened inside the suture locking member 4 and they are connected to each other (described below), the suture locking member 4 is engaged with the twisting or braiding grooves of the suture 2, thereby increasing the joining strength and making it difficult for the suture 2 to slip out of the suture locking member 4. Furthermore, in this case, the multifilament can be composed of different materials.

[0012] The suturing needle installed at the front end of suture 2 can be linear, curved, or linear with a curved tip; it is appropriately selected and used according to the suturing region.

[0013] Suturing of body tissue with the suturing instrument 1 having the above-described structure will be described below with reference to Fig 2. First, the suturing body 20 is set into the sheath 5. This operation is carried out by slightly pulling the ultrasound probe 6 located inside the sheath 5 to an operating portion side, thereby forming a space capable of receiving the suture locking member 4 inside the front end portion of the sheath 5, and setting the suture locking member 4 inside the space.

[0014] Then, the sheath 5 having the suture 20 set therein is inserted into a body cavity via a thoracal (not shown in the figure). The body tissue 30, which is to be sutured, is pierced with the suturing needle 3, while the suturing needle 3 is being held with a needle holder (not shown in the figure) inserted into the body cavity via a separate route, and the suture 2 that went through the body tissue 30 is pulled into a U-shaped groove 4a of the suture locking member 4 (the state shown in Fig 2(a)).

[0015] In this state, as shown in Fig 2(b), the suture 2 is tensioned with a forceps 32 and the separate portions of the tissue are joined by the tension force. At the same time, the ultrasound probe 6 is moved forward inside the sheath 5 and pressed against the suture locking member 4. In this state, the front end of sheath 5 is pressed against the suturing region of tissue 30. In such a state, ultrasonic waves from the ultrasound probe 6 are transmitted into the suture locking member 4. As a result, the inner portion of the suture locking member 4 generates heat and becomes softened under the effect of ultrasound waves from the ultrasound probe 6. It is also easily deformed under the pressure applied by the ultrasound probe 6 and fastens the thread 2. At this time, when the suture locking member 4 is pushed out to the tissue 30 side by the ultrasound probe 6, while the suture locking member 4 is being deformed and the suture 2 is being pulled, and the sheath 5 is pulled back to the operating portion side (state shown in Fig 2(c)), the suture locking member 4 slips out of the front end of orifice 10 (sheath 5) and is brought in contact with the suturing portion of tissue 30. At the same time, the suturing strength of tissue 30 is increased.

[0016] Then, the suture 2 and suture locking member 4 are left in this state inside the body. At this time, the excess suture 2 is cut with a scissors-like forceps and recovered together with the suturing needle 3. This operation completes the suturing of tissue.

[0017] As described above, with the medical suturing instrument 1 of this embodiment, the suture 2 can be easily pulled into the suture locking member 4 by using the U-shaped groove 4a formed in the suture locking member 4. Moreover, in a state in which the suture 2 is located inside the U-shaped groove 4a, the suture locking member 4 is deformed by ultrasound waves in order to fasten the suture 2, thereby providing for reliable, easy, and speedy locking of suture.

[0018] Furthermore, since the suture 2 is fastened and connected as a result of deformation of the suture locking member 4 by ultrasonic waves, the suturing strength is higher than that obtained when the sutures 2 are joined to each other and locked, or when the suture 2 and suture locking member 4 are joined by heat. Therefore, subsequent application of an external force cannot loosen the suture or disrupt the connection of the suture locking member 4 to suture 2.

[0019] Moreover, since the deformation of the suture locking member 4 with the ultrasound probe 6 is carried out in a state in which the suture locking member 4 and ultrasound probe 6 are held inside the sheath 5, the suturing operation can be conducted easily and reliably.

[0020] Furthermore, in the medical suturing instrument 1 of this embodiment, the joining strength with which the suture 2 joins the tissue can be maintained in a state in which the suture locking member 4 is pressed against the tissue 30, in other words, suture locking is conducted in a state in which the suture locking member 4 is pressed against the tissue 30. As a result, the suture locking strength is high. Therefore, a reliable suturing operation providing for a high suturing strength can be conducted.

[0021] Fig 3 shows an example of deformation of the suture locking member 4. Thus, the suture locking member 4a shown in Fig 3(a) has a V-like shape, the suture locking member 4b shown in Fig 3(b) has an S-like shape, the suture locking member 4c shown in Fig 3(c) has a W-like shape, the suture locking member 4d shown in Fig 3(d) has a Z-like shape, the suture locking member 4e shown in Fig 3(e) has an X-like shape, and the suture locking member 4f shown in Fig 3(f) has an H-like shape. In all the cases, there is at least one groove 35 into which the suture 2 can be easily pulled.

[0022] With such a structure, the suture 2 used to suture the tissue can be pulled into any of grooves 35 according to the type of tissue to be sutured or a procedure used. In other words, it is possible to select a groove 35 into which the suture 2 is to be pulled. Thus, if the suture 2 can be pulled into the convenient groove 35, the suturing operation can proceed smoothly.

[0023] The suture locking member 4g shown in Fig 3(g) has a horn-like shape. With such a structure, the suture 2 that was used to suture the tissue is inserted together with the suturing needle 3 into the suture locking member 4g through a wide opening 38 and is pulled out through a narrow opening 39.

[0024] Since the suture 2 can be completely inserted into such horn-like suture locking member 4g, when the suture locking member 4g is deformed and the suture 2 is fastened, the suture 2 cannot be removed from the suture locking member 4g. Therefore, fastening of the suture 2 can be conducted easily. Furthermore, since the suture locking member 4g has a wide opening 38, the suture can be easily passed through it.

[0025] A suture locking member 40 shown in Fig 4(a) has a plurality of openings 40a, 40b, 40c having different diameters, which are capable of passing the suture 2, and a plurality of grooves 35a, 35b, 35c of different size, which are capable of catching the suture 2 employed for suturing. In other words, the structure of the suture locking member 40 makes it possible to select the openings 40a, 40b, 40c which are to be used for passing and grooves 35a, 35b, 35c which are to be used for catching the suture 2 according to the size of suture 2.

[0026] With such a structure, a knot 41 is formed and the suture 2 is fixed to the suture locking member 40 in a state in which the suture 2 was inserted into one of the openings 40a, 40b, 40c in the suture locking member 40. In such a fixed state, the suture 2 that was used for stitching the tissue is fit into grooves 35a, 35b, 35c to pre-fasten the suture 2. Then, the deformation of the suture locking member 40 is caused by ultrasonic waves and the suture 2 is connected to the suture locking member 40.

[0027] Thus, with such a structure, the suture 2 is pre-fastened when it is fit into grooves 35a, 35b, 35c. Therefore, even if the forceps is separated from the suture 2 after the suture 2 was pulled into the grooves 35a, 35b, 35c with the forceps, when the suture locking member 40 is deformed to fasten the suture 2, the suture is not released from the grooves 35a, 35b, 35c, and the sutured state realized with the suture 2 is not loosened.

[0028] The suture locking member 45 shown in Fig 4(b) consists of two rods 45a, 45b, and these two rods 45a, 45b are joined with a hinge 46 so that they are free to rotate with respect to each other. With such a structure, after the tissue was stitched with the suture 2, the rods 45a, 45b are closed in a state in which the suture 2 used for stitching was placed between the two rods 45a, 45b. In this state, the suture 2 is fastened and fixed by causing the deformation of the suture locking member 45 with ultrasonic waves.

[0029] The suture locking member 50 shown in Fig 4(c) consists of a first member 51 having the suture 2 connected and fixed thereto, and a second member 52 having a fitting opening 54 in which the protrusion 53 formed in the first member 51 can fit. With such a structure, after the tissue has been stitched with the suture 2, the suture 2 can be fastened and fixed if the two members 51, 52 are integrated by fitting the protrusion 53 into the fitting opening 54 in a state in which the suture 2 used for stitching has been placed between the members 51, 52. It goes without saying, that in this state the suturing strength can be increased by causing the deformation of the suture locking member 50 by ultrasonic waves.

[0030] The suture locking member 55 shown in Fig 4(d) comprises a rod-like member 55a. With such a structure, after the tissue was stitched with the suture 2, the suture 2 and the rod-like member 55a are melt fused together in a state in which the suture 2 used for stitching was wound on the rod-like member 55a.

[0031] The suture locking member 60 shown in Fig 5(b) was formed to have a tubular shape; it is provided with a small-diameter orifice 61 adapted to pass the suture 2. Fig 5(a) shows the suturing body 20 having the suture locking member 60. With such a structure, a knot 63 is formed and the suture 2 is fixed to the suture locking member 60 in a state in which the suture 2 was inserted into the small-diameter orifice 61 in the suture locking member 60.

[0032] Fig 6 shows how the body tissue is sutured by using the suturing body 20 having the suture locking member 60 and the suturing instrument shown in Fig 1. Thus, initially, the suture locking member 60 is set inside the front end portion of the sheath 5 via the orifice 10. Then, the sheath 5 having the suture locking member 60 set therein is inserted into a body cavity via a thoracal (not shown in the figure). The body tissue 30 which is to be sutured is pierced with the suturing needle 3, while the suturing needle 3 is being held with a needle-holding instrument (not shown in the figure). The suture 2 that was pulled out from the body tissue 30 was pulled into the inner orifice of the suture locking member 60 (state shown in Fig 6(a)).

[0033] In this state, the suture 2 is now pulled with a forceps 32 and the portions of tissue are connected by the created tension force. At the same time, the ultrasonic probe 6 is moved forward inside the sheath 5 and pressed against the suture locking member 60. In this state, the front end of the sheath 5 is pressed against the suturing portion of the tissue 30. In such a state, the ultrasonic waves from the ultrasonic probe 6 are transmitted to the suture locking member 60. As a result, heat is generated inside the suture locking member 60 under the effect of ultrasonic waves from the ultrasonic probe 6 and the locking member is softened. At the same time it is readily deformed under the pressure applied by the ultrasonic probe 6 and fastens the suture 2. If in this state the suture locking member 60 is pushed out toward the body tissue 30 by the ultrasonic probe 6, and the sheath 5 is pulled back toward the operating portion, while the suture locking member 60 is being deformed and the suture 2 is being tensioned, the suture locking member 60 will be pulled out from the front end of orifice 10 (sheath 5) and pressed against the suturing portion of tissue 30. In addition, the strength of tissue suturing will be increased (see Fig 6(b)).

[0034] Then, the suture 2 and suture locking member 60 are held in such a state inside the body. At this time, the excess suture 2 is cut out with a scissors-like forceps 69 (see Fig 6(b)) and recovered together with the suturing needle 3. This stage completes the tissue suturing operation.

[0035] Then, when another tissue portion is to be sutured, the suture 2 cut with the scissors-like forceps 69 is passed through the small-diameter orifice 61 of the suture locking member 60 which is prepared separately (see Fig 6(c)), and again a knot 63 can be formed (see Fig 6(d)).

[0036] Thus, the suture locking member 60 having the above-described structure can be employed many times, thereby making it possible to use repeatedly one suture 2 for suturing in several places and increasing the cost efficiency. Furthermore, since the suture locking member 60 was formed to have a tubular shape and the suture 2 can be completely inserted therein, the suture 2 is not released from the suture locking member 60 when the suture locking member 60 was subjected to deformation to fasten the suture 2.

[0037] Fig 7 shows a modification of the suture locking member 60. The suture locking member 60a shown in Fig 7(a) has a plurality of orifices 61a, 61b, 61c with different diameters into which the suture 2 can be inserted. With such a structure, after the suture 2 having a thickness which the suturing was selected, the suture 2 is passed through the orifice 61a, 61b, 61c appropriate for suturing was selected, the suture 2 is passed through the orifice 61a, 61b, 61c having a diameter corresponding to the thickness of the selected suture 2. Then, a knot 63 is formed at the end of suture 2. Such a structure is convenient because sutures 2 of various thickness can be used.

[0038] The suture locking member 60b shown in Fig 7(b) has a groove 70 which is wide at its opening and narrow at its tip. With such a structure, after the suture 2 having a thickness appropriate for suturing was selected, the suture 2 is fit into the groove 70 to a depth corresponding to the thickness of the selected suture 2. The suturing operation is facilitated because it is not necessary to form the knot 63 at the end of suture 2.

[0039] The suture locking member 60c shown in Fig 7(c) has a plurality of grooves 73a, 73b, 73c of different thickness. Such a structure is convenient because the groove 73a, 73b, 73c into which the suture 3 is to be fit can be selected according to the suture thickness.

[0040] The suture locking member 60d shown in Fig 7(d) has a hook-like protrusion 75. With such a structure, after the suture 2 appropriate for suturing was selected, the suture 2 is fastened to the protrusion 75.

[0041] The suture locking member 60e shown in Fig 7(e) has a protrusion 76 with an opening 77. With such a structure, after the suture 2 appropriate for suturing was selected, the suture 2 is fastened to the opening 77.

[0042] Furthermore, in the above-described embodiment, the suture was joined to the suture locking member by causing the deformation of the suture locking member. However, it goes without saying that these elements can be joined by attaching in contact, melting to cause adhesion, and attaching by pressure. Furthermore, in the above-described embodiment, the suture locking member was deformed by ultrasonic waves. However, it goes without saying that the deformation of the suture locking member can be also caused by laser radiation, heating, electromagnetic waves, electricity, vibrations, chemical reactions and the like.

[0043] Various structures described in the following clauses can be obtained by using the modifications explained above.

1. A medical suturing instrument comprising a suture locking member having a suture connected and secured thereto and having at least one receiving portion capable of receiving a portion of the suture, a sheath capable of being inserted into a surgical region and capable of setting the suture locking member so that it can be freely detached therefrom, and suture locking means which is arranged inside the sheath and which fastens and fixes the suture contained inside the receiving portion of the suture locking member by causing the deformation of the suture locking member set into the sheath.

[0044] 2. The medical suturing instrument as described in Clause 1, wherein the suture locking means causes the deformation of the suture locking member by ultrasonic vibration energy. With

the structure of Clause 2, the suture can be rapidly fixed to the suture locking member. In this case, the ultrasonic vibration energy causes heat generation inside the suture locking member and fusion of the contact surfaces of the suture locking member.

[0045] 3. The medical suturing instrument as described in Clause 1, wherein the suture is connected and fixed to the suture locking member so that it can be freely detached therefrom. With the structure of Clause 3, the suture can be repeatedly used during surgery.

4. The medical suturing instrument as described in Clause 1, wherein the receiving portion of the suture locking member can fasten the suture.

[0046]

[Effect of the Invention] As described above, with the medical suturing instrument in accordance with the present invention, a sufficient suturing strength can be obtained by simple suturing operations. Thus, in the medical suturing instrument in accordance with the present invention, the suture can be easily pulled into the suture locking member by means of a receiving portion formed in the suture locking member. Moreover, the suture can be fastened by causing the deformation of the suture locking member in a state in which the suture was pulled into the receiving portion. Therefore, the suture can be locked reliably, easily, and rapidly.

[0047] Furthermore, since the suture is fastened and joined by causing the deformation of the suture locking member, the suturing strength is higher than that obtained when the suture is press attached to the suture locking member under heating or when the suture is locked by joining to itself. Therefore, the sutured state is not loosened under the subsequently applied external force and the connection state of the suture locking member and suture is not degraded.

[0048] Moreover, since the deformation of the suture locking member by the suture locking means can be conducted in a state in which the suture locking member and suture locking means are held inside a sheath, the suturing operation can be carried out easily and reliably.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

Fig 1(a) is a structural diagram of a suturing body constituting a medical suturing instrument relating to an embodiment of the present invention. Fig 1(b) is a plan view showing the main part of the medical suturing instrument, Fig 1(c) is a side sectional view showing the main part of the medical suturing instrument.

Fig 2 shows a mode of suturing operation using the medical suturing instrument shown in

Fig 1.

Fig 3 shows the modification of the suture locking member constituting the suturing body.

Fig 4 shows the modification of the suture locking member constituting the suturing

body.

Fig 5 shows the modification of the suture locking member constituting the suturing

body.

Fig 6 shows a mode of suturing operation using the suturing body shown in Fig 5.

Fig 7 shows the modification of the suture locking member shown in Fig 5.

[Legends]
1 - medical suturing instrument, 2 - suture, 3 - suturing needle, 4 - suture locking member, 4a - receiving groove (receiving portion), 5 - sheath, 6 - ultrasonic probe (suture locking means)

Fig 1(b)
Medical suturing instrument